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ABSTRACT

This book examines Gallia County (Ohio) one-room schools through the oral life histories of 14 retired female teachers. Interviews with the teachers focused on conditions and practices in one-room schoolhouses in the early to mid-20th century in rural southeastern Ohio, and on the common characteristics of one-room school teachers who became rural career teachers. The introduction describes the rationale for the geographical area chosen and the methodology used. Chapter 1 is an autobiographical narrative presenting the author's personal bias. Chapter 2 discusses oral history as a methodological tool and reviews the oral history literature on one-room school teachers from the late 19th and early 20th century. Chapter 3 presents background on the study site and draws on interview material to describe elementary school experiences; environmental conditions of the one-room school; the typical school day; discipline; commonalities of multiroom and one-room schools; the recitation as a teaching method; the Boxwell test; and the education of the teacher participants. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss teacher preparation, the multicultural history of the region, and the first year of teaching. Chapter 6 addresses personal and professional issues of female teachers, the communities and conditions in which they taught, opportunities for school administration, racial integration, and personal sacrifice for achievement. The conclusion reflects on the common philosophy, characteristics, and experiences of the one-room school teachers. Appendixes include the survey form, interview questions, and historical material from Rio Grande College. Contains references, an index, and photographs. (SAS)

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